



Harbinger

NOVEMBER and DECEMBER 2009 VOL 23 NO 6

Have you ever wished that you could contribute to science and do more to help conservation? Do you enjoy bird watching? It's not often that citizens have opportunities to collect data that is used to help scientists in conservation efforts, but *Project FeederWatch* gives people that chance. *Project FeederWatch*, operated by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada, is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders. The data collected helps scientists track movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Anyone with an interest in birds (you don't have to be an expert) can participate, including families, individuals, classrooms, home schools, clubs, and nature centers. There are even educator and home school resources available on the website at <www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/Members/EduHomeSchoolResources.htm>.

Project FeederWatch begins on the second Saturday of November and runs for twenty-one weeks through the first Friday of April. You decide how much time you would like to devote to counting, whether it's for fifteen minutes or several hours on each count day. However, counts should be conducted at least once every two weeks and for two days in a row.

All you have to do is provide birdfeeders and/or water to attract birds to your count site and then count. Report every species that is seen. Count only the highest number of individuals that are in view at one time; this helps to avoid counting the same bird more than once. Then report your bird counts on the *Project FeederWatch* website or on paper data forms that are mailed in.

Sign up for *Project FeederWatch* by visiting their website at <www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/> or by calling the toll-free number 877-741-3077. There is a \$15 annual participation fee which covers the cost of materials, staff support, website maintenance, and data analysis. Without this fee, *Project FeederWatch* wouldn't be possible.

This winter marks the twentieth anniversary of the nature center's participation in *Project FeederWatch*. Dedicated volunteers, as well as staff, have faithfully collected data over the years by watching the nature center's feeders from the Wildlife Viewing Area, and we will continue to do so this winter. (See the back cover for dates.) You are welcome to visit us during any of these count days. Conducting the winter-long counts at the nature center for so many years has allowed us to track the trends of birds that visit our feeders. (See the sidebar for some of the results.)

Join us in taking part in this citizen science project and be a part of bird conservation efforts. We are happy to do our part in counting birds, because we realize that birds count!

NATURE CENTER COUNT DATA

Average number of species:

- » 26 from 1989 to 1999
- » 33 from 2000 to 2008

From 1989 to 1997, no American crows at feeders. Since 1997, crows every year.

Increase in numbers of:

- » Northern cardinal
- » American goldfinch
- » Wild turkey
- » White-throated sparrow

Decrease in numbers of:

- » Dark-eyed junco
- » House finch
- » Common grackle
- » Blue jay

Highest number of species recorded at one time:

- » 110 Mourning doves
- » 101 American goldfinches
- » 54 Northern cardinals

Birds Count!



The View From The Bridge

Just when it seems like every business and agency, including the Missouri Department of Conservation, is reducing services, there is something new on the horizon. A bimonthly magazine designed specifically for kids will begin its inaugural issue in February 2010.

Xplor, as its name implies, is designed to entice children to get outdoors to explore nature and to reconnect with the outdoors. It's described as multi-media "nature-tainment" which includes exciting articles, stunning photography, and an internet component featuring video and audio clips that bring the articles to life and provide more information about how to explore the outdoors. For example, after reading an article about how artists and photographers use their art to help teach conservation, kids can visit the website to get video lessons on both subjects as well as encouragement to try their new skills outdoors.



Xplor will also feature articles about people who have jobs in conservation, stories about kids' real-life adventures in the outdoors, and a sure-to-be-popular series called "YUCK!" about all things slimy, stinky, and

just plain gross in the outdoors.

The magazine will cover the gamut of outdoor activities from birdwatching and hiking to fishing and hunting.

In this period of downsizing and service reduction, what is even more surprising than the introduction of a new magazine is the price—it's free, just like nature itself. (Out-of-state or foreign subscriptions are also available for a fee.) Stop by the nature center or the Southwest Regional Office to pick up a subscription form or subscribe online at <www.mdc.mo.gov/15287>. Visit the website at <www.xplormo.org> for additional information and get ready to *Xplor*!

Linda
Linda F. Chorce
Nature Center Manager

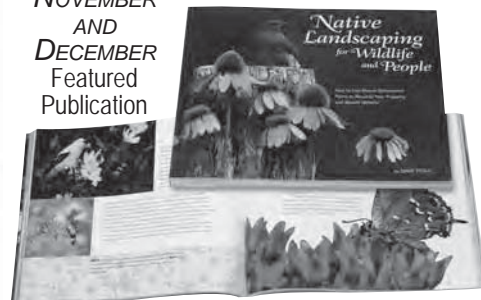
The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). The area is open daily 8am to 9pm from March 1 to October 31, and 8am to 6pm during the remainder of the year. The building is open daily from 8am to 5pm year 'round. The building and area are closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The area is closed to pets, bicycles, roller blades, hunting, fishing, collecting, and alcoholic beverages. No fees are charged.

Phone: 417/888-4237 Fax: 417/888-4241 <www.mdc.mo.gov/2360>

The Nature Nook Gift Shop

20% Off

NOVEMBER
AND
DECEMBER
Featured
Publication



Discounted price: **\$14.40** plus tax

Heritage card discount does not apply.

Holiday Sale . . .

December
17-24 **15% Off**
all Nature Nook
items discounted 15%

Heritage card discount does not apply

Thank You

The nature center would like to thank Mildred L. Eisele, Brad Marshall, Keith Bray, Bob and Ruby Ball, and J. J. Schick for donating various natural objects and Wendell Jeffery and Hamilton Native Outpost for native plants.

Temporary Display

November/December

Nature Photography

by Members of the Southwest
Missouri Camera Club

Ask The Naturalist

Seasonal changes spark many questions. In this section, we answer some common questions about natural events.

Will hornets return to the same nest after winter?

Hornet nests are shaped like large upside-down pears. They are made from a paper-like material produced from chewed plants. When the leaves have fallen, nests become visible in trees and bushes. The nests will last through the winter; however, the hornets will not. The only potentially surviving hornets are the queens. Queens find warm places, such as under logs or beneath soil, to spend the winter and will start constructing a new nest in the spring.

When will tree seedling order forms be available?

Each year, the Missouri Department of Conservation offers native plants for sale. These shrubs and trees come in a variety of bundles to accommodate your specific needs. For example, the Wildlife Cover Bundle will improve habitat and food sources for a number of Missouri wildlife species. Single species bundles of 25 can also be ordered. The seedling order forms will be available November 15. You may stop by the nature center to pick up one or order online at <www.mdc.mo.gov/forest/nursery/seedling/>. All plants purchased are for use in Missouri only. Orders are filled on a first-come, first-served basis until supplies are depleted. Orders will not be accepted after April 30, 2010.

Chipping In . . .

Volunteer Naturalist

Bob McCoy

Fast Facts:

Volunteer Class of 2007

Hours Donated: 1155 hours

Occupation: retired engineer and manager from Syntex and Ralston Purina

Education: B. S. in mechanical engineering from then University of Missouri-Rolla; M.B.A. from then Southwest Missouri State University

Nature Center Activities: patrolling trails, assisting with Conservation TEEN Club, and other programs.



I volunteer because: I love living in Missouri and want to give back to the state and the conservation department for all the enjoyment I have received from Missouri's natural resources. I also want the opportunity to show others what is available to do in the Missouri countryside, just like my Dad did for me when I was young.

The most fulfilling part of working as a Volunteer Naturalist is: helping with the Conservation TEEN club, snorkeling, floating, fishing, camping, hunting, and shooting clay pigeons. The staff and fellow volunteers are dedicated people that enjoy what they are doing and are a pleasure to be around.

One thing most people don't know about me is: that I was born in a Brooklyn (New York) naval yard while my Dad was on a naval ship heading around the horn for the possible invasion of Japan in 1945. He did not see me until I was six months old.

When I was young, a natural experience that influenced me was: that I was an Explorer Cub and Boy Scout in St. Louis and camped every month in army surplus tents. Each trip involved hiking, cooking our own food, working on merit badges, and sometimes fishing, hunting, and frog gigging. This probably set the stage for my love of the outdoors.

I am inspired by: the positive reaction of kids, young adults, and adults during my activities with the Missouri Department of Conservation.

One place where I have always wanted to go is: the South Pacific, specifically to New Guinea to trout fish.

My favorite volunteer memory occurred: on a snorkeling trip with the Conservation TEEN club when two teens asked why I was always smiling. This led to an interesting conversation and reminded me of how intelligent and insightful young people can be.

My favorite natural place to visit in Missouri is: the Jacks Fork River and surrounding area.

When I am not volunteering, you can find me: spending time with family and friends, cycling, hiking, floating, fishing, and exploring the Missouri countryside.

Newsletter Online

Thanks to everyone who has signed up to receive the newsletter online. If you'd like to start receiving your newsletter through the web, sign up at <www.mdc.mo.gov/2360>.

Volunteer Milestones

Liz Behle.....	3500 Hours
Dan Liles	2000 Hours
Joyce Tolliver.....	1500 Hours
Sue Schuble	1250 Hours
Bill Kastler.....	200 Hours
Meagan Kemp	200 Hours

Harbinger



Springfield Conservation Nature Center
Missouri Department of Conservation
4600 South Chrisman
Springfield, MO 65804-4931
Phone 417/888-4237
Fax: 417/888-4241

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US Postage Paid
Jefferson City Mo
Permit 274

The nature center building
and area will be closed on
Thanksgiving Day, Christmas
Day, and New Year's Day.

Not only are we watchin'
our winter birds but we're
countin' them, too. As
participants in Cornell
University's *Project
FeederWatch*, nature center
staff and volunteers will
keep track of the numbers
of each bird species found
at the feeders from late fall
through winter. (See schedule
below.) Come out and join us.
Count if you like or just enjoy
watching the birds.

Project FeederWatch Count Dates:

Nov. 17/18	Jan. 26/27
Dec. 1/2	Feb. 9/10
Dec. 15/16	Feb. 23/24
Dec. 29/30	March 9/10
Jan. 12/13	March 23/24

*Mark your calendar now . . .
Eagle Days are coming January 23 and 24*



NOVEMBER

EVENTS

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER



Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after November 1 to register for November programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

4 Toddler Tales

Wednesday, 11–11:30am

Bring your tots to hear a special tale about nature and to complete a craft project.

5 Hunting For Beginners

Thursday, 7–8:30pm

DISCOVER HUNTING

Discover Hunting programs are designed to help youth and adults experience the rich traditions of hunting.

Interested in hunting this season but not sure where to start? Learn the basics of hunting small game, such as rabbits and squirrels, and hunting white-tailed deer. An overview of all the basics will be covered including places to hunt, scouting techniques, shooting safety, hunting regulations, and more. Bring your questions. Ages 6–adult. *Call today to register.*

6 Hunter Education

Friday, 6–9pm and Saturday, 8am–5pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. The course is continued Saturday, 8am to 5pm. You must pass a written test to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. Bring a heritage card or any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permit if you have any of these. Ages 11–adult. *Call today to register.*

7 Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike

Saturday, 9–11am

Enjoy a volunteer naturalist-guided hike on the trails. All ages.



11 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11–11:30am

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

14 Hiking Club

Saturday, 8:30am–5pm

Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik leads this six-mile hike at Bennett Spring State Park. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Trail is rated as moderate to difficult. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

For Adults Only: Dutch Oven Cooking

Saturday, 9am–Noon

Learn the basics of Dutch oven cooking to amaze your family and friends with delicious, easy-to-cook meals. After a brief session on basics, the rest of the workshop will involve hands-on learning and tasting. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

Discover Nature Families Dutch Oven Cooking

Saturday, 1:30–4:30pm

DISCOVER NATURE FAMILIES

Discover Nature Families programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together.

Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) to learn the basics of Dutch oven cooking. After a brief session on basics, the rest of the workshop will involve hands-on learning and tasting. Ages 7–adult. Registration required.

19 Badge Bonanza

Thursday, 6:30–8pm

Attention all scouting and youth organizations! You won't want to miss this program on birds that will help you earn nature badges. We'll play some games and do fun activities that will help you learn about bird migration and identification. Program is also open to the public. All ages. Registration required.

20 Winter Wildlife Survivors Puppet Show

Friday, 11–11:45am or 1–1:45pm

The question is: How do animals spend the winter? The answer is: store, snore, and soar. Join ace reporter "Calvin the Catfish" and friends to get the scoop on surviving winter. All ages. Registration required.

21 Winter Tree ID

Saturday, 9–11am

Identifying trees in winter requires know-how and an eye for detail. Dress for the outdoors and learn how to know the trees without their leaves. Ages 12–adult. Registration required.

Advanced Nature Photography From Image Capture To Print

Saturday, 9am–Noon

Attention aspiring nature photographers! Volunteer Naturalist and Photographer Art Daniels is offering this first-time workshop dedicated to discussions about his routines of nature photography—from shutter release to the print. Topics will include the thought process of capturing the image, downloading into editing software, storage and file management, and the final product. The entire workshop will take place in the classroom. Camera equipment is not needed unless you want to photograph on your own afterwards. Ages 15–adult. Registration required.

24 Conservation Kids' Club Just Like Lewis & Clark

Tuesday, 6:30–7:45pm

Join us as we celebrate the incredible journey of Lewis & Clark. Learn about the importance of the bison to the survival of the Plains Indian tribes and to the success of the expedition. Try your hand at journaling about a "new" plant discovery and make a journal to take home with you. Ages 7–12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

The nature center building, area, and trails will be closed on Thursday, November 26, in observance of Thanksgiving.



Our ever-popular calendar keeps you in touch with the year's seasonal changes

LITTLE ACORNS

LITTLE ACORNS programs are for children 3–6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **LITTLE ACORNS** programs to one per month. Registration required.

Turkey Talk

Where do wild turkeys live and what do they eat? Which turkeys have beards? What sounds do they make? We'll discover the answers to these questions and more. Gobble! Gobble!

Friday, November 6, 11am or 1:30pm

Foxes In The Fields And Forests

Which fox lives in the fields? Which lives in the forests? Pounce on this program to find out facts about fox families. Fold an origami fox and make a fox "face" to take home.

**Saturday, November 7, 11am
Thursday, November 12, 11am or 1:30pm**

Wonderful Whitetails

We all know Bambi but what do you know about real deer? Where do they live? What do they eat? Come in for some antler-related antics and learn some of the wonders of the whitetails.

Tuesday, November 24, 11am or 1:30pm

27 Discovery Table Let's Talk Turkey

Friday, 1–4pm

Drop by for a closer look at turkeys.

28 Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers

Saturday, 10am–4pm

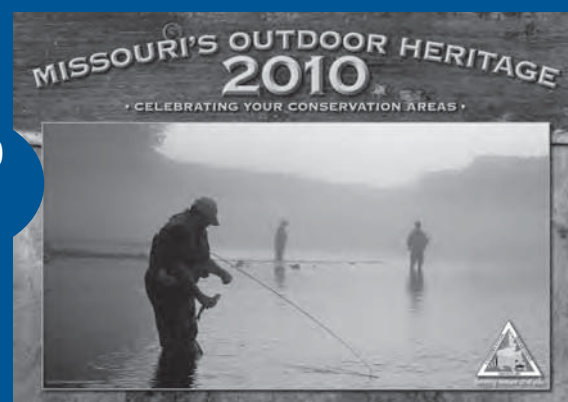
Stop by to see members of the Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers transform wood into treasures.

29 Virtual Hunting And Fishing

Sunday, 1–3pm

Attention hunters, anglers, and video game buffs! Here's your chance to try your hand at virtual hunting and fishing. While a video game can never take the place of a real experience, these *simulators* are sure to *stimulate* you to take a trip outdoors. Drop by anytime. All ages.

Our newest calendar celebrates Missouri's rich outdoor heritage



\$7⁰⁰ each

DECEMBER

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER

EVENTS



Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after December 1 to register for December programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

3 For Adults Only: Owl Hike

Thursday, 6–9pm
Join us for a nighttime trek to Bois D’Arc Conservation Area as we try to locate different species of owls. Learn their calls and some interesting facts about these predators of the night. Dress for the weather and bring binoculars if you have them. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Ages 18–adult. *Registration begins November 15.*

4 Nature And The Arts: An Evening With Photographer Tim Ernst

Friday, 5–6pm or 7–8pm
Before or after taking a stroll outdoors, enjoy the scenic photography and inspirational words of nationally-known nature photographer Tim Ernst as he returns to share images and stories from his latest publication—*Arkansas Wildlife*. See stunning images of wildlife, many of which are also found in Missouri, set to music. You’ll be inspired to explore the natural beauty of the Ozarks and areas beyond. Books and calendars will be on sale from 6–9pm. Tim will be available for book signing from 6–7pm and from 8:30–9pm. Ages 12–adult for the program. *Registration begins November 15.*

Evening Stroll

Friday, 6–9pm
You’ve seen the fancy flashing light displays all over town—now come out for a quieter, old-fashioned holiday evening. Enjoy a crackling fire, sip hot chocolate, and browse through the gift shop when you come indoors to get warm. The trails will be opened and patrolled, so bring a flashlight and a walking partner because you’re on your own.

5 Conservation TEEN Club Shotgun Shooting Clinic And Pheasant Hunt

Saturday, 8:30am–5pm
Come out and enjoy a day at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range. Learn shotgun shooting skills that will prepare you for the upcoming pheasant hunt held on December 12 at the range. In order to attend this pheasant hunt, you must attend the *Shotgun Shooting Clinic*. Time slots for your guided pheasant hunt will be drawn at the clinic. You may bring your own shotgun or one will be provided for you. Shotguns, shotshells, drinks, and lunch will be provided. Meet at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range; directions will be provided. Youth 16 years and older must be hunter education certified and have a current resident hunting permit. Ages 12–17. Registration required.

Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike

Saturday, 9–11am
Enjoy a volunteer naturalist-guided hike on the trails. All ages.

9 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11–11:30am
Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

11 Hunter Education

Friday, 6–9pm and Saturday, 8am–5pm
This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. The course is continued Saturday, 8am to 5pm. You must pass a written test to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. Bring a heritage card or any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permit if you have any of these. Ages 11–adult. *Call today to register.*

LITTLE ACORNS

LITTLE ACORNS programs are for children 3–6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **LITTLE ACORNS** programs to one per month. Registration required.

Furry Scurry

If you’re furry, you don’t need to worry about a cold winter flurry. Want to know why? Then hurry to the nature center for this program on mammals and their fur.

Thursday, December 10, 11am or 1:30pm

Trail Trackin’

Hey, footprint friends! Join us to learn about tracks and other signs left behind by animals. Make a track and do some trail trackin’ indoors.

Friday, December 18, 11am or 1:30pm
Saturday, December 19, 11am

15 Conservation Kids’ Club Holiday Crafts For Kids

Tuesday, 6–8:30pm
Hey, kids! Here’s your chance to make natural presents just in time for the holidays during this special meeting date. Drop by anytime and plan to spend at least an hour. Please bring a large sack to carry your gifts and the following items (empty and clean): soup can, tuna can, and 29-ounce can (the size peaches and pumpkin come in). Also, bring an electric Phillips screwdriver, if you have one, labeled with your name. Ages 7-12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

17 Conservation TEEN Club Year-End Review

Thursday, 7–8:30pm
Join us as we celebrate the close of another successful year of TEEN Club. After viewing a slide show of the year’s outings, we’ll enjoy cake and vote on possible TEEN Club outings for 2010. Prospective and current members, ages 12–17, and their families are welcome to attend. Registration required.

19 Hiking Club

Saturday, 8:30am–5pm
See the spectacular scenery that Ha Ha Tonka State Park has to offer. Volunteer Naturalist Carmen Hallock leads this five-mile hike. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is rated as moderate to difficult. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

The nature center building, area, and trails will close at 2pm on Thursday, December 24, and remain closed on Friday, December 25, in observance of Christmas.

26 Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers

Saturday, 10am–4pm
Stop by to see members of the Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers transform wood into treasures.

27 Animal Bingo

Sunday, 1–2pm
Put your nature knowledge to task as you and your family participate in *Animal Bingo*. Learn new facts and win prizes! All ages.

Nature Challenge

Sunday, 3–4pm
Bring your family and test your knowledge of the plants and animals of Missouri while playing this fun game. All ages.

29 Toddler Tales

Tuesday, 11–11:30pm
Bring your tots to hear a special tale about nature and to complete a craft project.

Snakes Of Missouri

Tuesday, 1–1:45pm
Sometimes they startle us, but snakes always fascinate us. Learn about this often misunderstood reptile, see snakes up close, and even touch one! Ages 5–adult.

Animal Bingo

Tuesday, 3–4pm
Put your nature knowledge to task as you and your family participate in *Animal Bingo*. Learn new facts and win prizes! All ages.

30 Toddler Tales

Wednesday, 11–11:30am
Bring your tots to hear a special tale about nature and to complete a craft project.

Winter Bird Walk

Wednesday, 11am–Noon
Dress warmly and join us for a winter bird walk. Bring binoculars and a bird field guide if you have them. Ages 7–adult.

Discovery Table: Winter Birds

Wednesday, 1–3pm
Fly in anytime and learn about the winter birds of Missouri, make a bird craft, and then visit the Wildlife Viewing Area to learn about *Project Feeder Watch*. All ages.

31 Missouri Mammals

Thursday, 11–11:45am
Find out how Missouri mammals survive the winter and other interesting facts about these animals. Ages 5–adult.

Nature Challenge

Thursday, 1–2pm
Bring your family and test your knowledge of the plants and animals of Missouri while playing this fun game. All ages.

The nature center building, area, and trails will be closed on Friday, January 1, in observance of New Year’s Day.

January

2 Discover Nature Families Attracting Birds To Your Yard

Saturday, 10am–Noon
MDC DISCOVER nature FAMILIES *Discover Nature Families programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together.*

Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) to learn how to attract birds to your yard, how to identify them, and then work together to assemble your own bird feeder to take home. Ages 5–adult. *Registration begins December 1.*

VIDEOS ARE SHOWN EVERY SUNDAY FROM 2-3PM.